

# Project Narrative, Analysis & Discussion for:

General Plan Amendment -  
Rural Neighborhood to Office  
2.5 acre site @ SWC Lone Mountain  
& Scottsdale Roads

**133-PA-06**

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## **I. Project Overview**

This request is for a General Plan Amendment from the Rural Neighborhood Category to the Office category on a 2.5 acre parcel located at the southwest corner of Lone Mountain & Scottsdale Roads (the "Property"). The Property is an undeveloped parcel that was annexed into the City and down zoned from Rural-43 (County) to R1-70 (City) in 1984. Across the street to the east is the planned Pederson Shopping Center, a 14.7 acre commercial site with 100,000 s.f. of retail space that was originally planned prior to annexation of the area. The Property is located within the Desert Foothills Character Area and covered by the Scottsdale Road Scenic Corridor Design Guidelines along with the Great Sonoran Desert Design Concepts and the Sensitive Design Principles.

The location of this 2.5 (gross) acre Property at the SWC of two major roadways – Lone Mountain & Scottsdale Roads is unique in-as-much as the Property will be required to dedicate additional property for R.O.W. along Lone Mountain & Scottsdale Roads. There is also a requirement for dedication of a scenic corridor / open space setback along both Scottsdale & Lone Mountain Roads. The impacts from the existing and future roadway traffic, Pederson Shopping Center, R.O.W. dedication and scenic setbacks result in a single family zoned parcel of-which its viability as a single-family lot has been dramatically diminished.

As this application moves through the process, a rezoning and use permit application will accompany the General Plan amendment. The rezoning application will be from R1-70 single-family residential to S-R (Service Residential). The S-R District is intended to provide professional type office uses of a local residential scale and character, intended to serve the local residents. The property development standards of the S-R District are strict in order to protect the low-density residential character of the area while allowing flexibility to promote a viable accessory use to the neighborhood.

Subsequently, a Use Permit application will be submitted for a Bank use. The zoning ordinance states Use Permits are granted to property owners to allow specific uses in a District. A specific site plan and building elevations will be presented as part of the Use Permit review and these elements will ensure the compatible nature of the project.

A thorough review of the elements of the General Plan and a review of the existing characteristics of the neighborhood along with an analysis of the future development in the area suggest the Property, from a long term Land Use / Planning perspective is most viable as a small scale office type development.

## **II. How this application furthers the Goals of the General Plan:**

**Character & Lifestyle** - The Character & Lifestyle principle seeks to promote a balance between the natural environment, the built environment and the surrounding neighborhood context.

The proposed General Plan amendment and subsequent Bank use promote the goal of a sustainable character by making the Property a viable "in-fill" type property. Remember, the impacts of the adjacent roadway dedications, scenic corridor setbacks, high traffic volumes and adjacent commercial shopping center challenge the quality of life available to a single-family user of the Property. Allowing the Property to respond to the character elements around it will promote a long-term solution to the challenges faced by the Property.

The General Plan recognizes that Scottsdale first and foremost is a residential community where the diversity and arrangement of land uses is designed to enhance quality of life and ensure long-term prosperity. This amendment promotes a variety of living and working opportunities through different land uses that are vital to neighborhoods. Per the City website, only 1% of the City's land is used or planned for offices. 54% of the City is reserved or developed for residential uses. The strong residential nature of the northern part of the City needs and deserves long-range thinking and decision-making, one that places appropriate scale office development in areas best situated to compliment the character of the area. This application places an office land use element in such an area.

**Economic Vitality** - The Economic Vitality Element addresses policies to better evaluate decisions and encourage economic development that will sustain the community. The Element has been prepared to ensure that the needs of Scottsdale's residential neighborhoods are balanced with those of its business community. This Element acknowledges the economic factors that strongly influence the future well being of the community and its current and future neighborhoods and residents.

This proposal integrates a non-residential development into a transitional area while protecting the integrity and value of the adjacent neighborhood. In the context of the Property, this development actually creates a superior opportunity for Scottsdale to realize a vision of strong neighborhood support services by placing this use on a relatively small parcel unsuitable for a single-family home.

**Neighborhoods** - Public participation is an important component of successful planning and community decision-making. We have fostered early and ongoing neighborhood involvement by contacting all property owners within approx. 1000 feet of the property. Owners were sent letters that included colored site plan, building elevations and a context aerial depicting the proposal. In addition, property owners were contacted by phone and the site has been posted with a Project Under Consideration sign. As the process moves forward, additional conversations and neighborhood meetings will take

place. All in an effort to promote the sharing of information as it relates to the specifics of the application and the City review process, all with the goal of preserving and defining the character of the neighborhood.

**Open Space** - Scottsdale citizens have often affirmed that one of our community's highest priorities is preserving and protecting the environment. Scottsdale's distinctive natural resources and environment contribute to our quality of life and the community's economic vitality.

This proposal will follow the principles outlined in the Scenic Corridor Guidelines and provide a continuation of the scenic setback along both Scottsdale & Lone Mountain Roads. Environmental features, native vegetation and wildlife habits will be preserved with the goal of achieving a sustainable balance between the conservation, use and development of Scottsdale's natural resources.

**Sustainability** - The city currently uses Policies & Guidelines to determine the level of participation a new development has relative to public infrastructure, based in part on the size and type of development. Through the zoning process and the development review process the city can evaluate appropriate dedications, development fees, and infrastructure provision. It is important to recognize that the likelihood of a small Property to participate in contributing to large areas of infrastructure within the city is slimmer now than in the past.

The financial ability of the Property to contribute to the local infrastructure is equal to or greater than that to be realized by the parcel if developed as a single-family lot.

**Transportation** – This section of the General Plan recognizes mobility choices to provide alternatives to the automobile and increase accessibility of the neighborhood to the to the community. The General Plan acknowledges that each neighborhood is diverse and has different mobility needs. The Transportation Master Plan is a comprehensive look at the city's entire transportation system. The master plan will work from the General Plan goals to identify specific issues to address transportation needs and objectives.

The Property and subsequent use will provide a local need serving the neighborhood without acting as a regional draw that would put additional stress on the local transportation network. Therefore, alternative transportation resources can be used to access the Property and ultimately relieve the stress on the City roadway system.

### **III. Additional Analysis:**

The estimated impact this amendment will have on water usage per year will be a less increase in usage when compared to a single-family development.

The estimated impact this amendment will have on wastewater generated per year will be less when compared to a single-family development.

The estimated number of employees this amendment will result in has an increase when compare to a single-family use.

The estimated impact this amendment will have on traffic or vehicle trips per day will result in an overall increase:

- The intersection of Scottsdale and Lone Mt. has an average daily volume of 26,000 vehicles.
- The north leg average daily volume (combined) is 21,500.
- The south leg average daily volume (combined) is 21,900.
- The east leg average daily volume (combined) is 4,300.
- No data on the west leg.

Trip Generation for the Pederson Shopping Center on the SE corner is anticipated to be:

- Total Weekday Daily Traffic: 6923
- Weekday AM Peak Hour Traffic: 705
- Weekday PM Peak Hour Traffic: 517

Estimated Trip Generation for a typical bank of this size is:

- Total Weekday Daily Traffic: 980
- Weekday AM Peak Hour Traffic: 144
- Weekday PM Peak Hour Traffic: 241

#### **IV. Analysis of changes to the General Plan Elements resulting from the proposed amendment:**

- **Character and Lifestyle**

- For the purpose of this Element, the application sets forth proposed design standards, neighborhood character/compatibility and Design Review opportunities that are not part of a single-family lot development.
- While the existing Rural land use designation was deemed appropriate for this area, a specific review of the site conditions demonstrate that this site is severely compromised by: the scenic corridor and roadway dedication requirements; roadway noise and traffic signal, lights; and the commercial land use to the east. The proposed Land Use designation of Office results in a site-specific response to the existing custom home character and environment surrounding the site. It also allows for a controlled compatible design of the site resulting in a local support service that can appropriately respond to the surrounding conditions of the area.

- **Economic Vitality**

- This Element helps determine if a proposed land use advances Scottsdale's economic vitality and the economic vitality of the area. By locating this office use at this mixed-use intersection, it can be directly accessed by residents and consumers in the vicinity of this intersection.
- The proposed Office land use designation meets the goal to integrate Support Services in a way that protect and buffer the neighborhood.

- **Neighborhoods**
  - This Element focuses on the City's vision to preserve, reinforce and enhance the character and stability of its neighborhoods. This application does not change this vision and adds a neighborhood buffer element to the corner.
- **Open Space**
  - Scottsdale citizens have often affirmed that one of our community's highest priorities is preserving and protecting the environment. The Office designation at this location protects the natural Sonoran environment by providing a greater scenic corridor setback and open space dedications than could be achieved with a rural single-family land use.
  - There is no change to the Implementation of environmental programs and conservation practices such as ESLO, Native Plant Ordinance, Scenic Corridor design guidelines or Sensitive Design principles.
  - This application results in intelligent integration of urban and rural development into an ecosystem that is a supportive relationship between natural resources, environmental quality and the economy of the area.
- **Sustainability**
  - The City has long stated the philosophy that new development should "pay for itself" and not burden existing residents and property owners with the provision of infrastructure and public services for a new facility. Through the zoning process and the development review process the city can evaluate appropriate dedications, development fees, and infrastructure provision.
  - Development fees and roadway dedications will add to the community financial resources. These financial resources, along with increased sales tax dollars are items that would not be realized if this site remains a Rural land use.
- **Transportation**
  - This application has no effect on the Community Mobility or Transportation Master Plan of the City

## **V. Analysis of how the proposed amendment contributes to the following:**

**Scenic Corridor** – This amendment and subsequent development is consistent with the Scenic Corridor Guidelines. The Guidelines call for a Scenic Corridor of 50 – 100 feet. Residential lots that are not part of a master plan community provide a 50' Scenic setback while commercial uses provide a 100' Scenic setback. The proposed Service Residential (S-R) District IS residential in scale and character and our plan provides for a Scenic Corridor along Scottsdale Road that averages 100'. The open space setback along Scottsdale Road results in the building being setback @ 110' from the R.O.W. line. A Scenic setback along Lone Mountain Road of 30' and overall building setback in excess of 100' is provided as well. Were this site to develop as a single-family lot, these open space and Scenic Corridor dedications would not be met. This is evident by reviewing the existing conditions of similar type single-family lots developed along Scottsdale Road.

**Vista Corridor** – No vista corridors apply to this property

**Character Area Plans** – The character of our community is complex and diverse. Each neighborhood setting holds an important image offering a unique opportunity for an elegant composition. The Desert Foothills Character Area established guidelines for design, which this application complies with by creating a residentially compatible character to the site development.

**Neighborhood Plans** – Neighborhood planning can be applied citywide however; it is more focused on the central & southern portions of the city and does not apply in this case.

**Housing Diversity** – Does not apply in this case.

**Economic Diversity** – Scottsdale's economy faces several economic challenges as the community matures. Build out and the traditional model by which new opportunities for economic growth are defined must be thought-through. There are new and non-traditional demands for a strong and versatile Scottsdale economy that this application provides.

**Transportation** – Transportation opportunities are provided with this application in as much as open space corridors are maintained, trail connections are available and a pedestrian connection from the site to the intersection can be developed.

## **VI. Describe key elements of the amendment identified by the Public Involvement program and what modifications have been made:**

A broad based public outreach program is being utilized to maximize citizen exposure, involvement and education with the application. The program includes informational letters, conceptual site plan, building elevations and color context aerial graphics mailed to all property owners within 1000' of the Property. In addition, this information has been provided to the Whisper Rock & Bellasera Community Association groups; the Coalition of Pinnacle Peak; the Desert Property Owners Association; and the Pederson Development Group.

A primary concern raised by neighbors so far has to do with property values. As this application moves through the review process we will commission an independent study to quantify impacts of this amendment on property valuation. A second concern identified by neighborhood feedback relates to the appropriateness of the proposed use at this location. It is the City's responsibility to understand development constraints and assess their long-term impacts on property. In-as-much, perhaps this site is not a suitable location to force a single family dwelling on considering the impact of additional roadway dedications; scenic corridor dedications and open space setback; noise pollution from heavy traffic patterns and the adjacent roadway intersection; along with a 14.7 acre shopping center with a 300 +/- lighted parking lot. Proper long range planning suggests this type of fractured ownership parcel can best serve the community when utilized as a neighborhood support service land use. (also see the Neighborhood Involvement Plan submitted with this application)

**VII. Describe how the amendment relates to the policies and guidelines of the Desert Foothills Character Area Plan – how it follows the plan and how it does not:**

The Desert Foothills Character Area was created to promote and the character of the area by establishing guidelines while recognizing traditional development considerations without infringing on private property rights. Growth in this Area is categorized by large lot single-family custom home-sites not part of a master planned community and as such have a variety of development considerations. This amendment relates to the key points of the Character Plan in the following manner:

Preserve the natural, visual qualities of the upper desert by using desert sensitive techniques. - This amendment and subsequent development plan provide for scenic corridor dedications, open space buffers and enhanced building setbacks to enhance the visual character and open space of the area. Furthermore, desert earth tone colors and materials on the building use the principal of minimal visual impact. A minimal building height (18' max. per the S-R District) and maintenance of natural desert landscape integrated into the built form maintain the dominance of the Sonoran desert setting.

Promote connected areas of desert open space and trails. - As noted above, this site will provide a substantial scenic corridor on Scottsdale Road and Lone Mountain Road. Extended building setbacks and additional open space will minimize the visual impact of the development while providing connectivity of open space and view corridors in the area. The opportunity for trail connections are also available. Berming and vegetation screening is proposed as opposed to constructing large, expansive perimeter walls to maintain a sense of wide open space and maintain wildlife corridors.

Identify and celebrate the rural desert character of the area. - This area consists of an assortment of custom and semi-custom homes with diverse lifestyles from equestrian to suburban. This application draws from that identity a site design and building architecture that echoes a rustic rural scale and low-intense use consistent with the surrounding neighborhood character. The building uses non-reflective materials and the architect has considered all four sides of the building as a whole element to the setting of the neighborhood. Precluding any parking lot lighting follows the Dark Skies principal. Only low-level lighting for security purposes will be available. Eliminating the use of perimeter walls that enclosed space enhances the sense of openness and wildlife corridors are maintained.

Infrastructure – Unlike single-family homes developed in this area drainage and/or roadway improvements required of this development will be part of the public hearing review process. Drainage structures will blend into the natural desert by using colors and textures reflective of the surrounding conditions. Utilities will be located underground and the owner will work with utility providers to blend the colors of above ground cabinets with the surrounding desert and screen with vegetation where applicable.



